

Friends of Sandbanks 2024 AGM Report

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2024 Annual General Meeting The Waring House, Picton December 10, 2024 1700 – 1900

Highlights of 2024...

Beach Cleanups

In 2024 we decided to focus our attention on a single “Big Beach Cleanup” which happened on April 27th. Along with our own members, we had a strong contingent of members from the [Picton Kiwanis Club](#), and staff members from the Park’s own Discovery Program.

We plan to hold a similar event in 2025, and hope to attract even more volunteers. It is encouraging to see so many individuals carrying their own trash bags and pick-up sticks helping out as they make their regular walks along the beach. While the Park is doing a stellar job of cleaning, we can still add that personal touch! Every individual really can make a difference in keeping our beaches spotless! And we need to join forces with other like-minded groups!



SandFest 2024

For the first time in over twenty years, we were forced to cancel this popular event because of torrential rain.

But it wasn’t all bad news... the Tuesday Tutorial Day went well, with a large crowd turning out to see Rod Watson, expert Kingston sand sculptor, offering hints and techniques to all our budding sand artists! Many thanks, Rod!

We also had a pop-up shop selling some of our Friends of Sandbanks Discovery Store merchandise which was also well received.



Tree Planting

The Friends provided more funding for planting trees and shrubs, some in areas of campgrounds that had experienced storm-related losses, and many others in the cleared Buckthorn removal areas on West Point.



Highlights, continued:



We will continue to support the Park in their reforestation efforts and expect to commit funds toward a large and varied planting program in 2025.

Buckthorn Blitz 2024

Partnered with Sandbanks Park, and local volunteer organizations, the Friends again supported this growing annual event to rid West Point of invasive buckthorn.

Volunteers from the Park, The Friends, the South Shore Joint Initiative, Quinte Naturalists, the Meeting House at West Lake and even some members of the Friends of Lemoine Point in Kingston. put in two hard days of work helping clear this inaccessible part of West Point. We provided lunches for each of the two-day project.

And a big thanks to the County for their generous grant that will really help with the reforestation of this area in 2025. We are moving forward!

And many thanks to John Lowry for recruiting so many new volunteers!



Truth and Reconciliation

This was our second year of a unique collaborative project with Sandbanks Provincial Park and the native Mohawk community of Tyendinaga.

We provided funding for the production of tri-lingual informational plant signage within West Point as well as funding for native-elder visits. We have approved funding to bring students for a visit into the Park from the [Kawenn'on:we School in Tyendinaga](#). These will be ongoing projects through 2025.

It is very important for us to remember that the first human habitation of this area began just after the last ice age, and not only with the arrival of European settlers after 1784. *(Image at right created by Dall-E, Chat-GPT AI)*

It is hoped that more archaeology of the first-peoples' heritage in this area be undertaken in the next few years. Pottery shards and arrowheads are still being found throughout the West Lake Bar. There is much undiscovered history!



Signage Around the Park

In addition to the signage produced in collaboration with our Mohawk neighbors, we also maintain and replace other signage in the Park. Among the signs that we updated this year was the old wooden sign in front of the Maple Rest Heritage House with a new, more weather resistant metal version. *(right)*



Highlights, continued...



Discovery Store

For another record season, our Discovery Store Manager Liz Lattner with the support of Penny Sipkes and Cathie Coultis gave us a wonderful selection of unique items for visitors to remember their visit to Sandbanks Park. Our Friends of Sandbanks Discovery Store is located at the West Lake Campground Office and open daily during the peak-summer-season.

Thanks too to Daniel Patel for his unique visual designs, and, of course, the Discovery Program staff that cheerfully modelled our fashions on the beach!

Sales at our store were the highest ever, and provide a valuable source of revenue that helps fund our many projects.

Please remember that all profits from the store, and indeed all donations and grants to our charitable organization, go directly toward funding our projects in your Sandbanks Park.

Without the support of our generous donors, we cannot continue to make a difference!

Cedar Sands Trail Rehabilitation

As one of the most popular trail at Sandbanks Park, and one which has been in operation since the early-1990s, the walkways, platforms and stairs are beginning to show signs of age.

The Friends' Board committed to a multi-year funding program to have the entire trail brought back to its original concept, with a priority of repairing any outstanding safety issues as soon as possible. [<Details of the Project >](#)

What has happened so far:

- Spring 2024 Meeting with the Park to discuss the plan forward
- Requests for local contractors to submit detailed construction proposals
- Wentworth Landscapes selected to provide initial surveys and plans
- Several walk-throughs with Friends, Park Staff and Scott Wentworth, a full set of "before" images made
- November 2024, Detailed construction plans from Scott Wentworth submitted to the Board and Park

Next steps:

- January 2025, Discussion with Board and Park as to what must be the first construction priority
- Tendering out construction work to local contractors
- Spring – Fall, 2025 Begin the first phases of construction

We expect this to be a multi-year project, and we will certainly need additional funding over the next three years to make this ambitious project a reality. Many thanks to John Lowry for taking charge of this vital trail rehabilitation. We really need your financial support to complete this project.



Friends of Sandbanks Board 2024



Getting all Board Members together for a group photograph every year is a near impossibility! However, we do our best to gather folks together at our many events, despite some members' shyness at being photographed!



Your Board in 2024:

John A. Brebner, Chair

John Drechsler, Vice Chair

Matt Young, Treasurer

Liz Lattner, Discovery Store Manager

*John Lowry, Cedar Sands Trail Project Manager,
Buckthorn Blitz Coordinator*

*Daniel Patel, Graphics Coordinator, SandFest Event
Organization*

Mark Despault, Director-at-Large

Penny Sipkes, Director-at-Large

Cathie Coultis, Director-at Large

Donors

Space restrictions prevent us from listing all our donors during the past year. If we receive a personal cheque, as Chair, I really try to be there in person, but that is sometimes not possible.

We had a recent donation from [Dune Hopper Brewery Co.](#), our Vice-Chair Drex was far too happy to act on my behalf to receive their donation! Lucky man!

And many thanks to owner **Greg Emm and family** at his new West Lake business for thinking of us. The Friends of Sandbanks wish him success in this new endeavour. I will be making several visits in the new year to help support his bottom-line!

We appreciate all donations, and suggestions as to how we may improve the Friends!



Other Events



- We joined in the Prince Edward County Earth Day Seminar in May; Friends' Board Members Cathie Coultis, Liz Lattner and Penny Sipkes showed attendees what we are all about.
- In June, we participated in the WLCA Artisanal Show at the West Lake Church.
- In August, John Brebner made an updated series of aerial images that included the [Monarch Point Conservation Reserve](#) on the south shore of the County.



Having a series of semi-annual images provide a clear view of any environmental changes that occur during any fixed period of time.

Brebner's earlier images from 2015 show what was never to be... the windmills in South Marysburgh, and without these photographic reminders, it can be all too easy to repeat past mistakes...

The full August 2024 Image collection will be posted in early 2025.

Archival Contributions

One of my favorite personal projects for the Friends of Sandbanks is the historical research and acquisition of old images and artefacts that tell the early history of the sandbanks and those first pioneers.

This summer I was contacted by Nancy Mackle, who is the daughter of the last owners of the Lakeshore Lodge on West Point, John Lawson Mackle and Georgina (Kendall) Mackle.

[Genealogy of the Mackle family...](#)

Nancy donated several historical images, promotional pamphlets and signage for the Lakeshore Lodge in the 1950s and 1960s. I am in the process of digitizing her collection to give copies both to the Park and the [Prince Edward County Archives](#).

Among the colour images are a series of vibrant Kodachrome slides of the costumed waitresses and hostesses that served the legendary themed lunches at the Lodge.

And just as I was assembling this document, I received a few more black-and-white images of the Lakeshore Lodge, from about 1951, from Janet Nagy, who is the little girl in the bottom image, beside the car, and whose mother was a good friend of the Mackles!

I am always on the lookout for images of any early Sandbanks area settlers. Please drop me an email if you can make a digital contribution: john.brebner@pollymoth.com and if you are interested in the genealogies of Upper Canada settlers, please have a look at my extensive historical collection at:

<http://www.pollymoth.com/genealogies.html>

Thanks!



Lakeshore Lodge, about 1951



Financial Statements:

At press time, the financial documents were not complete. These will be appended later.

Please direct any comments or questions about this document to: info@friendsofsandbanks.org

Respectfully submitted,

John A. Brebner, Chair



